



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Darren Rogers
Senior Director, Communications & Media Services
Churchill Downs Racetrack
(502) 636-4461 (office)
(502) 345-1030 (mobile)
Darren.Rogers@KyDerby.com

SEEKING THE SOUL BEATS QUIP BY NECK IN GRADE II, \$600,000 STEPHEN FOSTER

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 15, 2019) – **Seeking the Soul** prevailed in a thrilling three-horse stretch battle with **Quip** and **Tom's d'Etat** to win Saturday night's 38th running of the \$600,000 Stephen Foster Presented by GE Appliances (Grade II) by a neck at Churchill Downs.

Owned and bred by **Charles Fipke**, 6-year-old Seeking the Soul covered 1 1/8 miles on a fast track in 1:49.27 with Hall of Fame jockey **John Velazquez**, who rode the winner for trainer **Dallas Stewart**.

The lofty \$345,960 first prize lifted the classy bay Kentucky-bred's earnings to a whopping \$3,335,802 from a record of 7-6-7 in 27 starts. Also, the victory in the Stephen Foster, a Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In Classic Division" race, earned Seeking the Soul a guaranteed spot in the starting gate for the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic (GI), which is scheduled for Nov. 2 at Santa Anita. Also, his connections will have all Breeders' Cup pre-entry and entry fees covered and receive a travel award up to \$10,000.

"We will definitely be in the Breeders' Cup Classic this year," Stewart said. "This horse is so special to our entire barn. We have to thank Mr. Fipke for allowing us to train him. With family and friends here tonight, this is as good as it gets – we're in the Classic."

Tom's d'Etat set the pace in the Foster and led the field of 12 older horses through quarter-mile fractions of :24.60, :49.43 and 1:13.44 with Quip matching strides about a half-length back to his outside. Meanwhile, Seeking the Soul had a perfect tracking trip in sixth down the backstretch.

As the horses reached the top of the stretch, Quip drew even with Tom's d'Etat and took over with three-sixteenths to run. Seeking the Soul moved into third and was full of run in the clear from the outside as he powered down the stretch to engage the leaders. He collared the front-runners with a sixteenth of a mile to run and edged clear for the win.

"As soon as I broke out there and got into the first turn, he was a little more aggressive than I want him to be," Velazquez said. "He's never been that close in the first part of the race. But I got him back to where I wanted him to be, got comfortable where he was, and then down the stretch, pulling out, he had it."

Seeking the Soul rewarded his backers with mutuels of \$11.20, \$6.20 and \$4.20 as the 9-2 third betting choice. Quip, with Florent Geroux aboard, returned \$12.20 and \$8.20, also at 9-2. Tom's d'Etat, another 1 3/4 lengths back in third under **Shaun Bridgmohan**, paid \$4.80 to show.

Santa Anita Handicap (GI) winner Gift Box, who invaded from Southern California as the 2-1 favorite, was another 5 3/4 lengths back in fourth and was followed by Thirstforlife, Yoshida (JPN), Exulting, Runaway Ghist, Tenfold, King Zachary, Alkhaatam and Rated R Superstar.

This was the third graded stakes win for Seeking the Soul, who won the 2017 Clark Handicap (GI) and last year's Ack Ack (GIII) at Churchill Downs. After winning the Ack Ack, Seeking the Soul finished second to City of Light in the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (GI) and Pegasus World Cup Invitational (GI). Following an eighth-place finish in the Dubai World Cup (GI), he returned to the states for the Alysheba (GII) on Kentucky Oaks Day and finished third behind McKinzie and Tom's d'Etat.

Seeking the Soul is son of Perfect Soul (IRE) out of the Seeking the Gold mare Seeking the Title.

STEPHEN FOSTER QUOTES

John Velazquez, jockey of SEEKING THE SOUL (winner): “He ran really well here the last time out, and we knew coming from Dubai he probably wasn’t going to be 100 percent. He had the perfect timing to win that race (Grade II Alysheba, May 3, where he finished third), just like this one. Today he was right back to where he normally is, high energy. As soon as I broke out there and got into the first turn, he was a little more aggressive than I want him to be. He’s never been that close in the first part of the race. But I got him back to where I wanted him to be, got comfortable where he was, and then down the stretch, pulling out, he had it.”

Dallas Stewart, trainer of SEEKING THE SOUL (winner): “We will definitely be in the Breeders’ Cup Classic this year. This horse is so special to our entire barn. We have to thank Mr. Fipke for allowing us to train him. With family and friends here tonight, this is as good as it gets – we’re in the Classic.”

Florent Geroux, jockey of QUIP (runner-up): “We were in a perfect spot tracking (Tom’s d’Etat). He fought the entire way down the stretch and even when (Seeking the Soul) got to us, he tried to dig back in and rally. He ran great.”

Shaun Bridgmohan, jockey of TOM’S d’ETAT (third): “It was kind of an interesting race shape. I didn’t expect him to necessarily be on the lead.”

Joel Rosario, jockey of GIFT BOX (fourth): “They went pretty slow up front and he just couldn’t close into the leaders.”

Wes Hawley, trainer of THIRSTFORLIFE (fifth): “One of these day’s we’ll get the big race. He ran a credible effort but just didn’t match up the Top 3 tonight.”

Joel Rosario, jockey of YOSHIDA (JPN) (sixth): “I thought we were sitting in a good spot, but he just wasn’t steady after that. They kind of kicked home and he stayed in the same space. They kind of left me. Turning for home, he made a move, but they kind of got away from us again.”

Tyler Gaffalione, jockey of EXHULTING (seventh): “We were in a good spot and were comfortable up the backstretch but when I asked him for his run he picked up some ground just got a little tired late.”

-END-